

Q. Mr. President—some of that growth was due to Government purchases. Do you think this growth pace can be maintained in the face of all the budget cutting that's going on?

The President. Well, they say their budget will give us a slower growth for the next 7 years than we've averaged in the last 25. I find that hard to believe, but that's what they say. They say their budget will give us lower business profits for the next 7 years than we've averaged. I find that hard to believe, but that's what they say. They say their budget will give us higher inflation in health care costs even though they claim they're going to lower health care inflation.

There are a lot of things about their budget I don't agree with. But if we cut Government expenditures, obviously, a lot of Government expenditures are with private contractors. If we—for example, if we build a new airplane, most of the people who build the airplane are—they're private sector employees. If we build a building, the people who build the building are private sector employees. But if we do this in a disciplined way, and we keep our investments up and focus on shrinking Government consumption—that is, lowering the programs that are of marginal benefit or getting rid of them, and slowly downsizing the Government, although we've been in a rapid downsize period—and we keep investing in America, then the activity in the private sector with growth will more than overcome the shrinking of the public sector. But we have to do it in a disciplined way.

That's another thing that bothers me about this health care business. I have been talking about the need to reduce health care inflation since the day I became President. I've been talking about the need to give more options for managed care since the day I became President and since long before I became President. But you cannot just say, "Well, we're going to take \$450 billion out of it, even though we don't know what's going to happen." It is too much. It is too extreme. It is not necessary.

So the thing for us to do is to ultimately—what my goal is, to ultimately come out with a budget which satisfies their stated principles, which I have embraced, but which

honors my stated principles, which they have yet to embrace. And they are—those, the stated principles that I've put out are more important for standing up for what's right for America, number one, and more important for growing our economy, number two, than what's in their budget.

And so we're going to keep working on this, but I am not going to bend on my principles. I cannot, and it's not good for America. This program—now we have 3 years of evidence. It's not only morally right, it is working for the country, and we need to keep going in this direction.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11 a.m. at the West Wing Portico at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on Signing the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996

October 27, 1995

I have signed into law H.R. 1976, the "Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996."

I urge the Congress to complete action on the remaining regular FY 1996 appropriations bills and to send them to me in acceptable form. Last year, the Congress sent to me—and I signed—all 13 appropriations bills by September 30. Regrettably, this is only the second bill that I have been able to sign for this fiscal year.

This Act provides \$13.4 billion in discretionary budget authority for programs of the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration, including the Special Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); food safety programs; and various programs to protect and support rural communities.

The Act also provides a total of \$41.2 billion for the Food Stamp program, the Child Nutrition program, the Commodity Credit Corporation, and other mandatory programs.

In signing this bill, I have made it possible for USDA to promptly send full-year payments of nearly \$1.8 billion for the Conservation Reserve Program. This program compensates farmers for protecting environmentally sensitive cropland.

I am pleased that H.R. 1976 provides the resources necessary to keep the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children on the Administration's path to full funding. An estimated 7.5 million women and children will be served, 400,000 more than in FY 1995. This program provides important nutrition benefits and health-related services.

I am also pleased that the Congress continued funding at my requested level for the Child Nutrition program and other important nutrition programs for needy Americans, including the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Soup Kitchens, and the Nutrition Program for the Elderly.

Funds included in the bill for the Agricultural Conservation Program will provide Federal cost-share financing to farmers for needed soil and water conservation practices and structures, including water quality improvements.

The bill also includes funds I requested for farm operating and farm ownership loans, which help new farmers get started in agriculture, as well as those farmers who do not qualify for private-sector financing.

In addition, H.R. 1976 omits many of the troublesome provisions contained in earlier versions of the bill that would have compromised the ability of Federal nutrition programs to assist low-income Americans. However, I am concerned about the provisions to reduce food stamp spending in an appropriations bill. This action may lead to proposals for additional food stamp cuts in the reconciliation process. This program, which assists almost 27 million low-income children, elderly, and working family members, continues to be the cornerstone of the Federal nutrition safety net.

The Act permits full funding for the Export Enhancement Program, as I requested. This program assists exports of American agricultural products, which reached an all-time high in FY 1995 of \$53 billion—a trend we would like to continue.

While funding provided by H.R. 1976 is an improvement over funding levels in earlier versions of the bill, I am still disappointed by its reductions from my request for rural development. By contrast the Act includes \$58 million in unrequested funds for earmarked university research facilities. I believe rural Americans would have been better served had these funds instead been channeled into rural development programs. Doing so could have, for example, helped 7,000 rural families realize the American dream of owning their own home through USDA's single-family loan program.

Section 726 raises constitutional concerns and I have therefore asked the Department of Justice to advise me as to the validity and enforceability of that section.

Despite these concerns the overall bill is acceptable because of the very positive provisions I have already mentioned and because of the benefits its programs provide to farm families and rural communities.

Again, I urge the Congress to meet its responsibilities by sending me the remaining regular FY 1996 appropriations bills in acceptable form.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 27, 1995.

NOTE: H.R. 1976, approved October 21, was assigned Public Law No. 104-37.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

October 17¹

The President announced his intention to appoint Cynthia A. Murray-Beliveau to be a member of the Advisory Committee on the

¹ This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.